

Frequently Asked Questions

The following are frequently asked questions regarding the proposed Wellhead Protection Area Overlay District. Questions are listed in no particular order. If your question is not listed here, please contact Kirstie Dixon, Brunswick County Planning Director, at 910-253-2027, or email at Kirstie.dixon@brunswickcountync.gov.

- ☐ What is a Wellhead Protection Plan?
 - In 2013, the Brunswick County Commissioners adopted the *Wellhead Protection Plan* with specific policies for the protection of the public community well area.
- ☐ What is the purpose of this overlay district?
 - The overlay district will provide additional development regulations with the goal of protecting the 14 wellheads serving well over 12,000 customers and the aquifer that the wellheads draw from.
- ☐ Will this restrict all commercial activity?
 - No, restrictions on certain uses could apply to businesses whose activities negatively impact/contaminate the aquifer. All commercial activity would have to comply with all the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay standards including a 23 ft depth limitation on excavation, dirt removal, and land disturbance.
- ☐ What types of uses will be prohibited?
 - Prohibited uses are proposed for commercial and industrial uses that could negatively impact/contaminate the aquifer. Prohibited uses include fueling stations, mining operations, junkyards, cemeteries, dry cleaning, towing yards, commercial boating facilities, and garage service.
- ☐ How does this affect my project that is already approved?
 - Projects that have received all approvals or have been submitted to Brunswick County Planning prior to the adoption of the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay Zoning District would not be affected or have to comply with the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay and can continue. After adoption, all changes or expansions would have to be in compliance with the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay Zoning District. Policies from the Brunswick County Wellhead Protection Plan may affect an decision of projects going through the an approval process.
- ☐ Will the adoption of the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay Zoning District by Brunswick County apply to properties within nearby towns?
 - No, the adoption of the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay Zoning District by Brunswick County NOT apply to properties within nearby towns. The County is encouraging Boiling Springs Lake, Oak Island, and St. James, to adopt the a similar ordinance to protect the water quality of the aquifer. The County does not have the ability to REQUIRE the adoption of the ordinance to protect the water aquifer and each jurisdiction has the ability adopt as written, adopt with changes, or not adopt the ordinance.
- ☐ When would the County adopt this overlay district?
 - The county took input from area residents and the development community to draft the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay Zoning District in the fall of 2022. Since then, revisions have been made based on comments received. A revised draft will be brought to the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners for a public hearing and their consideration on May 15, 2023.
- ☐ Will this restrict signs?
 - Signs are permitted per the underlining zoning and will not have additional standards.
- ☐ How large is the buffer from wellheads?
 - The buffer from each wellhead varies but on average is 1,500 feet.

- ☐ Is a multi-story building allowed?
 - Will be permitted per the underlining zoning and will not have additional standards.
- ☐ Will septic system be allowed?
 - No, new septic systems will not be allowed. Existing septic systems will not be affected.
- ☐ How will this impact individual homeowners?
 - Non-commercial use of fertilizers will be allowed.
 - Private wells will not be affected.
 - Existing septic systems will not be affected but new septic systems will not be allowed.
 - Will have to comply with all the Wellhead Protection Area Overlay standards when building a new home, shed, or accessory building.
- ☐ Will single-family, duplexes, and multi-family be allowed?
- ☐ Yes, residential (single-family, duplexes, and multi-family) will be allowed per the underlining zoning and will not have additional standards.
- ☐ With the additional site requirements, will there be increases development related fees?
 - Increases in development related fees are not proposed at this time.
- ☐ Where does the authority come from for local governments to have zoning and implement a Wellhead Protection Zoning Overlay?
 - The North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) in § 160D-701 & 702 grant local government the power to adopt zoning regulations to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.
- ☐ Will the NC 211 widening project currently under construction by NCDOT be allowed under the proposed overlay?
 - Yes, the NC 211 widening project will be able to continue.
- ☐ How many acres in unincorporated Brunswick County will be in the wellhead Protection Zoning Overlay?
 - The Wellhead Protection Zoning Overlay will encompass 3,140.8 acres in unincorporated Brunswick County.